

Catamena, I

August 8, 1959
Ca de San Antonio

There is one other small finch around here, more or less in the same areas as the Lark-like Finch, the Ashy-throated Finch (a many Spinus and Zonotrichia). Apparently far more common than any of the local Pyrgulus sp. I think it may be a species of Catamena, or something close to it. Sexes very similar or identical.



The general effect of this little finch is quite reminiscent of a female Volat ina. It is relatively larger-headed, thicker & shorter-billed, smaller bodied, and shorter-tailed than any of the local Pyrgulus sp.

It seems to be quite gregarious. Either that or family parties with full grown young often come together when feeding.

I have only heard this species utter two types of notes, both quite CN-like in physical form.

The most common is a buzzy, rasping, short "Dzhut". This is often uttered in doublets (without ritualized postures or movements) by startled birds flying away from me.

This morning I watched a perched bird look at me for a long time.

Catamenia, Aug. 8, 1959, II

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and utter a lot of "Dzbut" Notes, (I think at irregular intervals), after a while the bird switched to uttering their "Trit" or "Tik" Notes which sounded very much like the "Tik" Notes of the Fork-billed Finch. There were usually fairly long (several second) intervals between successive "Trit" Notes, but the bird did once give a very accelerated burst of at least 5 or 6 "Trit" Notes when another bird of the same species flew by.

It is just barely possible that the "Dzbut" Notes of this species are strictly homologous with the song of the Fork-billed Finch.

I saw one young bird of this species beg from its parents. Took the "usual" form: ♀ (of the same) and hearre "Zhaa zhaa zhaa..." Notes.

May 22, 1960

Catamenia I

Ca de San Antonio

I now think that some at least of the little striped brownish sparrow-like finches I saw around here last year were the ♀'s of Catamenia analis. I am also certain that the little bird drawn immediately above on the preceding page was a ♀ of this species.

So ~~XXXXX~~ = analis = D'Orbigny's Seed-eater

There are definitely at least several pairs or 6 or 7 individuals around here now, both in the hedges along the flat cornfields and on the slopes at the base of the mountains. Almost certainly far less common than the Ashy-throated Finches, however.

One ♂ and ♀ we have seen seem to stick together pretty well (although they certainly aren't together all the time). Presumably mated. The other ♂'s and ♀'s we have seen have been separate (from each other).

We have frequently seen a single ♂ or ♀ D'Orbigny's more or less

Catania, May 22, 1960, II.

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cloudy associated, feeding, with groups of Ashy-throats, but this association must be at least fairly loose — as the D'Orbigny's frequently leave the flocks to go off by themselves.

I have not seen any very interesting displays by the D'Orbigny's this year, but I have observed a few reactions more or less connected with gregariousness and/or low intensity hostility.

One solitary ♂ I watched quite closely sat in a bush, quite silent, performing very frequent U-D TF's, with little or no WF's. Just like the Ashy-throats.

Later on, we saw what appeared to be a pair feeding in a bush. Both birds performed a lot of extreme WF's (presumably with TF's) in these circumstances. One or both birds also uttered a lot of single "D33" or "Debut" CN's like those I heard uttered by ♀'s last year.

According to David, one ♂ uttered a "Isce-yoo" CN as it flew away from him.

The general effect of this species in the field is certainly very Phrygilus-like.

Catania, I

May 23, 1960

Ca de San Antonio

The ♂ D'Orbigny's is surprisingly Sporophila-like in general appearance. We watched one ♂ today who seemed to be semi-crested in much the same way as the Varied seed-eater in Panama. (This ♂ eventually began to preen that his "CR" was an intention general ruffle.)



Catamarca, May 23, 1960, II.

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Ca de Cotacallao

This afternoon we found quite a lot of D'Orbigny's feed eaters on the slope of a very large ravine or deep valley (see today's notes on Phrygilus). Mostly low shrubbery, with a few scattered Eucalyptus trees. The D'Orbigny's feed-eaters were far more common here than at San Antonio (now), and also apparently more advanced in the breeding cycle.

Quite a lot of the ♂ D'Orbigny's (at least 3 or 4 individuals) were singing quite frequently between approximately 3:00 and 4:30 p.m.

We paid special attention to one particular ♂ (which I shall call "A").

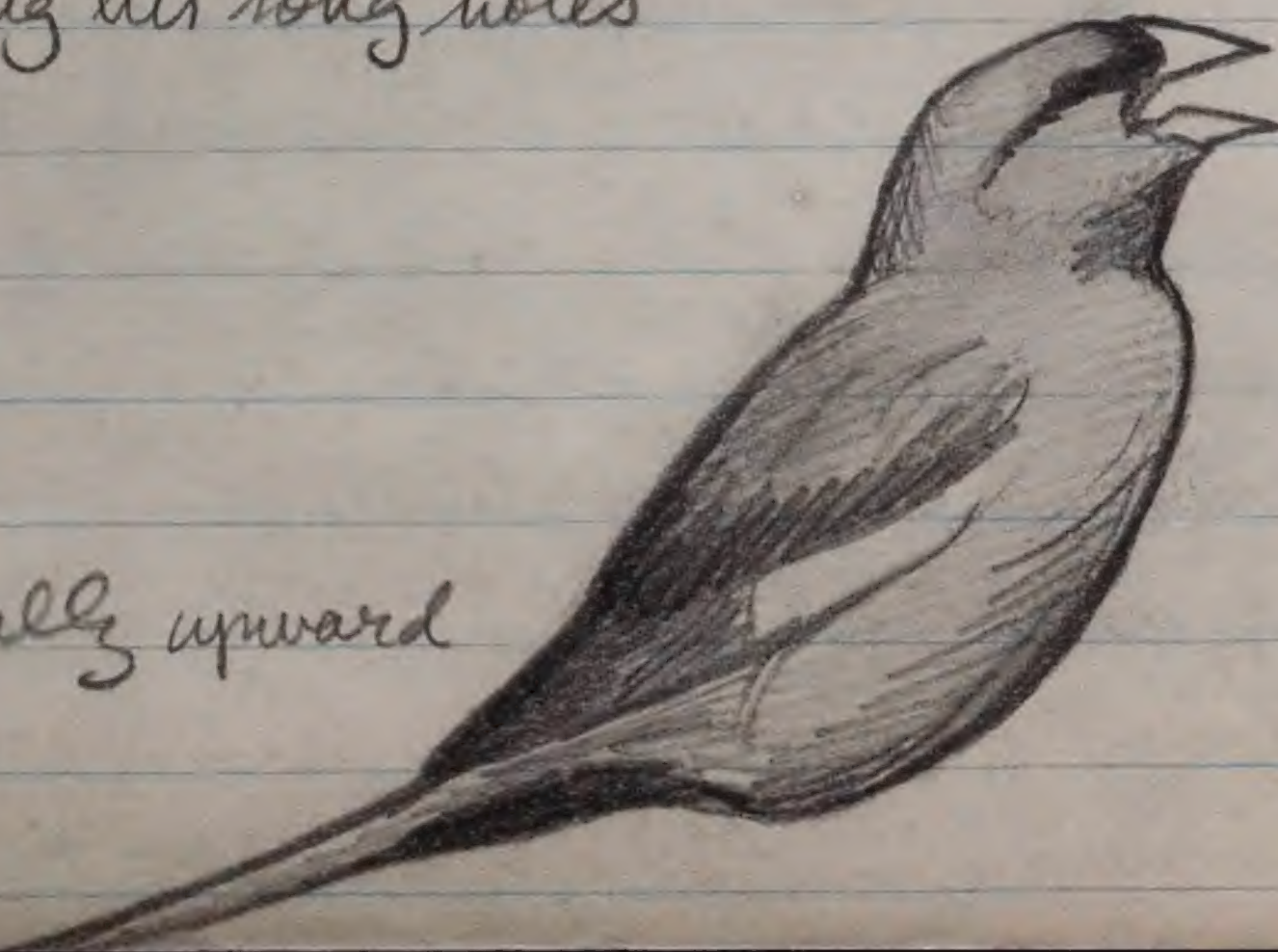
A's songs (and those of all the other ♂ D'Orbigny's in the neighborhood) were remarkably similar to the songs of ♂ Ashy-throated Finches Brief R's. Frequently repeated. Some of them were quite nasal. A single song note of the nasal type might be represented as "Sraaaaaauh" Others were almost or completely non-nasal. These latter were essentially identical with the song notes of ♂ Ashy-throats - except for the fact that they did not have the buzzy quality which is so characteristic of the song notes of Ashy-throats.

A's posture during his song notes was comme ça:

Not fluffed No CR

Quite ERECT.

Head tilted slightly diagonally upward



In between song notes, he tended to relax. Set a little less erect. His head came down to horizontal. And he also looked around from side to side, quite energetically but rather irregularly (i.e. his looking movements were probably not ritualized as such).

When he was singing relatively infrequently, i.e. not very intensely, he tended to be more fluffed, and sit less erectly than when he was singing most frequently and rapidly.

(I was never able to watch the other ♂'s singing as closely as I watched A, but I think that their song postures were similar or identical to the song posture of A.)

Most of the songs of the ♂ D'Orbigny's this afternoon were delivered from perches at the tops of small bushes or shrubs, perhaps 1-3 ft off the ground; but we did see some songs delivered from higher perches, in Eucalyptus trees, perhaps 15 ft off the ground. (It should be remembered that the slope of the ground here is very steep, so that a bird singing 15 ft. above the base of the tree in which he is perched may be only a few feet above the ground some distance away.)

I noticed that at least one ♂ Ashy-throated Finch used exactly the same perches as the A ♂ D'Orbigny's (when the latter was away from the area).

In general, D'Orbigny's seed-eater and the Ashy-throated Finch seem to prefer exactly the same habitat for all purposes.

Late this afternoon we watched a ♂ D'Orbigny's (not A) chase a female, repeatedly for quite a long period of time. Fast twisting aerial pursuits, alternated with what appeared to be brief aerial scuffles, and brief periods when both birds landed on the ground or in low bushes (unfortunately, we could not see the birds when they were on the ground or in low bushes). Some of this apparently largely or completely aggressive

Catmonia, May 23, 1960, IV,

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purzuits were accompanied by several "Dzunt" or "Dz3" notes by one or both birds. (I am beginning to think that these notes must be purely hostile.)

(When I say we watched a male pursuing a "female", I mean that we presumed the pursued bird was female. It was in feminine striped brown plumage. But its bill appeared to be quite yellowish — unlike the bills of the presumed ♀'s I have seen before. It might conceivably have been a juv. ♂. Or perhaps the bills of ♀'s in breeding condition are brighter than those of ♀'s in non-breeding condition.)

I checked the WF patterns of ♂ A several times. When he is really moving about quite actively & frequently, he does many rather extreme WF's (apparently always synchronized with TF's) when perched in the intervals between flights.

Catmonia, I

May 24, 1960

Ca de Cotacallao

We watched D'Orbigny's feed-eaters again today, in the same place as yesterday. They were not very active as a whole. They went through the same phases of activity as the Ashy-throated Tachids in the same area (see today's notes on Phrygilus); but they performed even less display.

I only noticed two features of minor interest.

One ♂ D'Orbigny's definitely uttered "Tut" CN's in flight (when moderately disturbed by us). They sounded exactly like the "Tut"s of Phrygilus spp.

One ♂ D'Orbigny's, singing in the usual way, was very closely approached by a ♀ Ashy-throat. She came within 2 inches of him, and sat the

Catamarca, May 24, 1960, II.

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ere for some seconds, but he absolutely ignored her, and continued singing.

This species does seem to be a less ground-dwelling form than the Phrygilus spp. It often feeds only a few inches off the ground, but seldom or never actually on the ground itself. This is quite unlike the Ashy-throated and Lark-like Finches which feed on the ground very frequently.

Catamarca, I

May 25, 1960
Ca de Tránsito

We came upon an area this afternoon where D'Orbigny's feeders were more abundant than any place I have ever seen before. A large flat field, surrounded by Eucalyptus plantations. The vegetation in this field was mostly low shrubbery, 1 to 2 ft in height. There were occasional taller shrubs scattered around the field, and some higher thickety shrubbery along the outer edge of the field, at the border of the Eucalyptus. (The climate in the area of this field is probably slightly but significantly more humid than at Cotacallao or San Antonio.) Most of the D'Orbigny's spent most of their time in the lower shrubbery, occasionally perching on higher bushes or low in trees. A few were scattered through the Eucalyptus itself.

All the birds we watched appeared to be paired. ♂'s and ♀'s moving around close together.

We watched one mated pair, sitting about a foot apart, fairly low in a Eucalyptus tree, preening. Every once in a while one or both birds would fly or hop to a new perch a few feet away. Once, when the ♀ was moving about, but still not far from the ♂, she uttered 3 or 4 "D33" or "D3but" Notes. This was not accompanied by any

Catamenia, May 25, 1960, II.

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trace of overt hostility - so these notes were almost certainly not hostile.

The most striking aspect of the behavior of the ♂'s this afternoon was the nearly complete absence of singing. None of the ♂'s ever sang when they were near their mates. It was very noticeable that, when a ♀ who had been near her mate suddenly flew away, and the ♂ did not follow her, he immediately began to sing, the very instant after she had gone. This is a very good indication that the song of this species is produced by some frustration or thwarting of some pairing and/or sexual desires.

I was surprised to see that ♂'s of different pairs did not seem to mind very much when they happened to come close together. I also saw a ♂, perched in a Eucalyptus tree with his mate, ignore another ♂ sitting in a bush at the base of the tree. Thinking it over, in fact, I don't think that I have ever seen any overt hostility between ♂'s of this species!!!

Late this evening, after sunset, we suddenly noticed a ♀ D'Orbigny's flying about excitedly, uttering lots and lots of "Dz3" or "Dz3_{run}" notes. Continued for quite a long time. Every once in a while she would pause and sit on a perch for a few seconds, but she continued to utter the same notes very rapidly while perched. Her perching posture was completely unutilized at such times. All the time the ♀ uttered these notes, she appeared to be quite alone, with no ♂ near her. Eventually, she fell silent - and we then noticed that there was a ♂ with her. I think that her great burst of "Dz3" or "Dz3_{run}" notes must have been provoked by the fact that she had become temporarily separated from her mate. These feminine notes may be the exact equivalent of the masculine song. It would thus appear that the "Dz3" or

Catamenia, May 25, 1960, III

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||| ~~Drum~~ "Drum" Notes of this species are either generalized frustration react-
ions or the result of thwarting some pairing and/or sexual
drive(s).

Catamenia, I

May 29, 1960
Cerro Picchuca

Several times before today we have seen individuals of what appears to be another species of Catamenia here, on the outskirts of the hedges where we have been studying various tanagers, diglossas, etc. (i.e. on the edge of some largely grassy fields).

The general appearance of this species is quite distinctive. Bill quite heavy; pinkish-orange-yellow. The whole plumage of the head and lower parts of the body is generally a rather pinkish-buffy color. The head is rather buffy-grayish, with some faint streaking on the crown & nape. The breast is a clear pinkish-grayish-buffy. The belly and flanks seem to be more orange in general tone; and there is some streaking on the flanks, at least. The wings seem to be dull gray. The under side of the tail is dark brown. We have not yet been able to get a decent view of the back and upper side of the tail.

(Yes!) I think that this species must be C. minor (= ~~XXXXXX~~)

This morning we suddenly became aware that there were lots of these birds singing. I do not think that we could have overlooked such frequent singing before. I think that the breeding season of these birds must have just begun.

All the singing we watched this morning was performed by birds perched in bushes. In low bushes in the middle of a grassy field. Or higher bushes in the hedge.

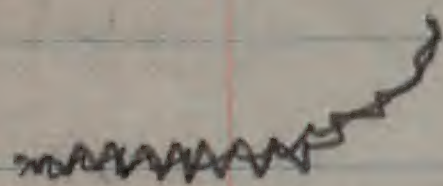
Cotnamia, May 27, 1960, II.

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It is possible that this species has more than one type of song (see below); but we only saw one type uttered this morning.

This song is usually composed of 4 moderately long notes. Definitely buzzy. Rather reminiscent of the song notes of the Arkly-throated Finch in quality.

A typical complete song might be represented by the following diagram.



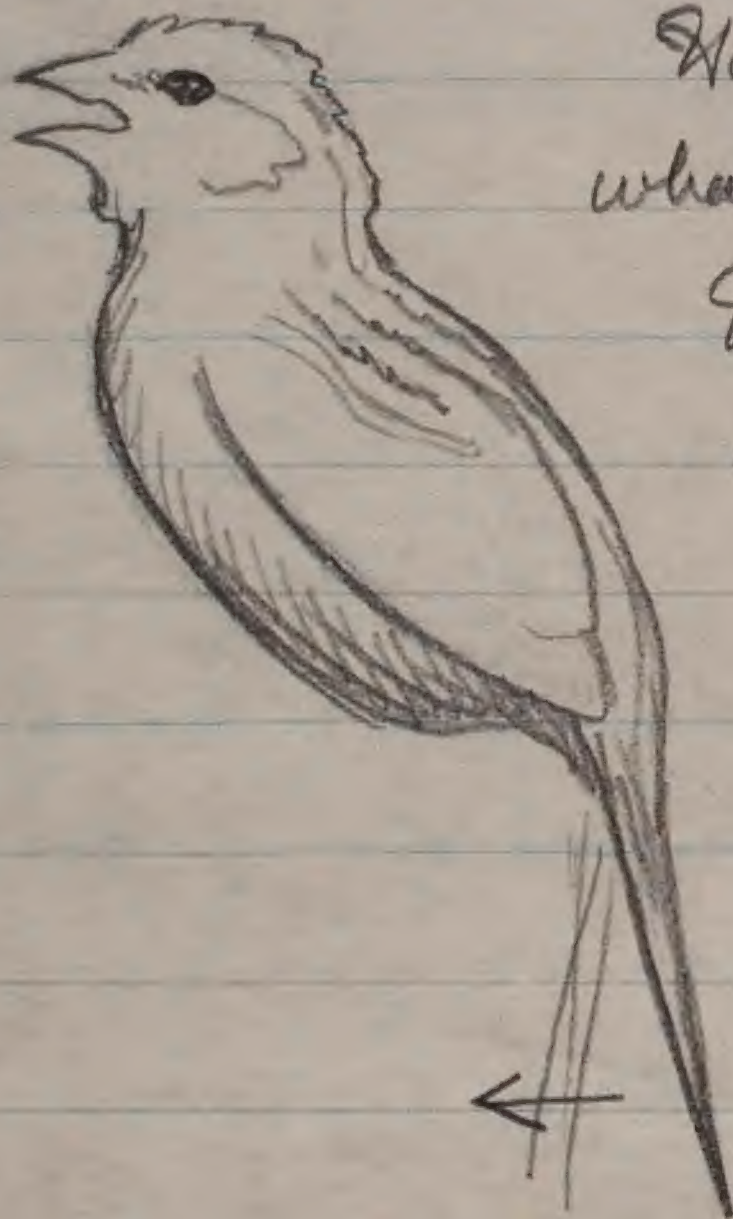
—————
"Zzzzzzz - Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz - Zzzzz - Zzzzz"

Sometimes the last note is omitted.

This is uttered from postures very much like the singing postures of D. Orbiqun's seed-eater.



Posture of bird sitting in low bush (possibly without room to arrange tail properly).



Head probably somewhat ruffled.

Wings probably somewhat drooped.

This may be the typical singing posture.

Catamenia, May 29, 1960, III.

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The drawing on the right hand side of the preceding page shows the posture of a bird sitting on a high exposed perch without any encumbering leaves or stalks nearby. It may be typical. We noticed that this bird brought its tail slightly but conspicuously forward each time it uttered a note of the song. (The tail was relaxed, brought back, between notes, even between the notes of a single song.)

Like D'Orbigny's seed-eaters, these birds tend to lift the head, and probably tilt the bill diagonally upward, with each note of the song.

All the birds we saw singing this morning were apparently alone. And none of their songs provoked any obvious response from any other bird.

Daved thinks that he saw one bird utter a perfectly typical song, as described above, in flight. Slow "floppy" flight.

This species certainly has the same order of TF's and WF's as the other species of Catamenia and Phrygilus. Quite frequent when just hanging about and/or feeding.

Catamenia, I

May 30, 1960

Cerro Pulumicha

I now think that part of my description of the ♂ of this species on p. 9 is slightly misleading. The whole face and breast appear to be quite grayish (at least in most lights), rather than pinkish.

The ♂'s also have streaked backs; and the streaking on the back of their heads & necks may be quite conspicuous. They have white outer tail feathers (or at least, the inner vane of these feathers are white).

The ♀'s of this species are very similar, but they are more pinkish-buff on the face and breast. Their breast is also streaked. As in the case of D'Orbigny's Finch, we seen birds of this species in ♀ plumage in

Catamenia, May 21, 1961, II.

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also at least 1 ♂ minor. Singing quite a lot. In low bushes, just like the D'Orbigny's.

The songs of the minor this afternoon were rather similar to those of the birds we observed above Hono last year, but apparently not identical. Somewhat variable.

Usually consisted of one low buzzy note, followed by one clear whistle note, followed by two more buzzy notes. More or less common.



Sometimes a more complex phrase was uttered, apparently an incomplete combination of 2 phrases like the one above. More or less common.



Catmon, May 21, 1961, III

(14)

or

mmmm

mmmm

Sometimes abbreviated:

mmmm

mmmm

mmmm

Twist note apparently always lower than any of the others.
I am not absolutely certain about the changes in pitch of some
of the notes of these songs. Possibly the first buzzy note is sometimes
or usually mmmm instead of mmmmm.

Possibly the high-pitched whistles are usually or sometimes

or ——— instead of

These songs are really rather reminiscent of Atlapetes rufinucha !!

Catamenia, May 21, 1961, IV.

(15)

While he sang this afternoon, the ♂ minor sat in an upright
aligned-looking posture more or less like the ones I drew last year,
but without any trace of CR.

Catamenia, I

May 22, 1961
Ca de Iniquito

Watching in the same place this morning, from well before
dawn onward.

Much to my surprise, neither species of Catamenia did very
much singing at dawn. Both species did a little - but much
less than yesterday afternoon.

Later in the morning, I saw quite a lot of interesting beh-
aviors among the D'Orbigny's. In what appeared to be a small
flock including at least 2 ♂'s, and 2 birds in juvenal or adult ♀
plumage.

The 2 ♂'s chased one another back & forth very actively
for quite a long time, occasionally punching close together momentari-
ly between chases. Apparently hostile. Interestingly enough, however,
they showed no display at any time. Always quite silent.

A few seconds later, the flock was all together. Moving abo-
ut in an apparently perfectly friendly manner. But one or more of the
birds uttered quite a lot of "Dzant" Notes. (I wonder if ♂ D'Orb-
igny's also utter such notes? ^{minor} I have yet to hear any "Tut"
Notes this year which I was sure were uttered by ♂ D'Orbigny's.)

Then I saw what I thought was a cop attempt. ♂ apparen-
tly on top of ♀. ♀ with wings drooped, doing extreme Q (rather slo-
wly). Her head & body were more or less diagonal, possibly because

she was perched on a nearly vertical stem. The "♀" also uttered a continuous series of "D33" Notes. Like ordinary "D33" Notes in other circumstances, but possibly a little less hard. The ♂ was quite silent. Then the ♂ flew away, without display. The "♀" stopped ♂ and "D33" Notes immediately.

Unfortunately, I did not see the preliminaries to this performance. But I am sure that neither bird uttered any distinctive calls or notes beforehand.

When I saw this performance, I was absolutely certain that it was a cop. attempt. But then I saw food-begging and feeding (see below); and so I cannot be absolutely certain about anything. It is conceivable that the ♂ I thought was copulating was merely perched above the "♀", trying to feed her. But I think it extremely unlikely.

A few minutes after this presumed copulation attempt, I saw a bird, either juvenile or adult ♀, begin ♂-like semi-H post ure. Uttering "D33" Notes, which were gradually accelerated into "33 33 33 33" Notes. This "begging" bird was then fed by another bird, also a juvenile or an adult ♀!

A few minutes later, I saw a juvenile or an adult ♀ begin to beg (again), in more or less the same way. With a slight trace of TV! This begging bird was quite near an adult ♂. But the ♂ did not respond. And both birds flew away in a few seconds.

It is possible that the same bird did all these ♀-begging performances this morning, but I can't be sure about this. (It is impossible to follow individual birds continuously in the bushes here.)

Catamenia IMay 23, 1961
Ca. de Inagunto

Back to the same place this morning before dawn.

The D'Orbigny's were around as usual, but very inactive (today was very windy), and I couldn't study them well. The only interesting incident I saw today involved two ♀'s or juveniles. They had a long & violent fight in the air. Accompanied by HAC Notes. There might be transcribed as "Dzānh dzānh dzānh..." Quite like ordinary "Dzāt" and "Dzz" Notes, but somewhat longer and more nasal.

I am now beginning to think that all the "Dz -" Notes of all Catamenias (and all Phrygile) must be at least partly hostile.

Very early this morning, before sunrise, I heard a ♂ swinging for quite a long time. This was definitely not the ♂ I heard in this field a couple of days ago. In a different area. And his song was like the songs of the birds we heard on Pichincha last year. I.E. the second note of each phrase, the high whistle, had a slight rattle and tone.

I saw the same ♂ swinging several times later in the morning. His posture was most undisturbed during this swinging. No CR. Tail sometimes (at least) not lowered (i.e. kept moderately high as in the left-hand drawing on p. 10, May 27, 1960). Neck not stretched up very much. Breast and belly quite appreciably fluffed when viewed from the front. His bill was kept open throughout each song phrase (not closed between notes). Opened more widely with louder notes than with softer ones.

The third note of each song phrase is usually the loudest. Some

Catmon, May 23, 1961, II.

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times the second note is equally loud. The first note is always the softest (this general rule seems to apply to the songs of both the ♂'s in this field here.)

At one time this morning, I saw a ♀ minor carrying n.m. Probably the mate of the ♂ who sings like the birds on Pichincha in his area.

The ♂ minors are really quite easy to recognize in the field. Especially front view. Front and sides of head, breast, and belly seem to be a uniform French gray (D'Orbigny's are probably slightly bluer). The bills of ♂ minors also seem to be pinker than those of ♂ D'Orbigny's. Finally, the ♂ minors seem to lack the black facial mask of ♂ D'Orbigny's.

Catmon, I

May 24, 1961
Cerro Atacaso

Much to my surprise, there were a number of minor here in the bush just above where I have been studying Diglossas. I have heard several ♂'s singing, and seen one ♀.

Almost all the songs of ♂ minors I heard in this area today were incomplete. Composed of only 1, 2, or 3 notes. Otherwise like the songs I have heard elsewhere.

I saw another pair of minor right down by Hono this evening. This time I noticed that the ♂ had warts under tail-coverts.

Catantusia, I

May 21, 1962
Piedra Blanca

I have suddenly begun to worry about my identification of the second species of Catantusia here. It is possible that I have confused homochroa with minor (monata), if both species occur in the area. I don't think I have ever seen the skin of a ♂ minor. The skins of ♂ homochroas I have seen seem to be identical with the plumage of the ♂'s I have identified as minor in my previous notes. Have rufous under tail-coverts.

So from now on I shall have to be very careful of my identifications and descriptions of birds of this type.

This morning, I worked near Floa. Down by the town itself I heard lots of songs which seemed to be "incomplete" versions of "minor" song. At dawn. Composed of only 2 notes.
mmmm

mmmm

Later in the morning, along the path above Floa, I saw a single ♂ perched silently in a bush. This bird was French grey almost all over, with streaked back and wings, and rufous under tail-coverts. (For the time being, I shall call all such birds "Type I", whether or not there is a "Type II" here.)

In approximately the same area, I heard lots of "minor" type songs. Some composed of only 2 notes, like the songs heard earlier down below. Others composed of 4 notes (in one case 5).

Catmonia, May 21, 1962, II.

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more or less like the songs heard near Inaguito last year (see notes of May 21, 1961, pp. 13 & 14).

Once, I thought that both 2-note and 4-note songs must have been uttered by the same bird.

Unfortunately, however, I never saw any of the birds singing in this area.

Ca de Inaguito

Working here in same field as last year this afternoon.

3:25 Can hear several D'Orbigny's singing here. (This habit of singing during the daytime may be another indication of relationship to Volatinia.)

5:15 See single ♂ "minor", more or less in same place as last year. Quite silent. Has rufous under tail coverts. Not sure if it has streaking on back or not.

Catmonia, I

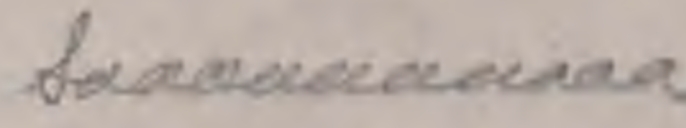
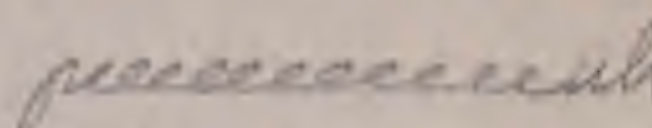
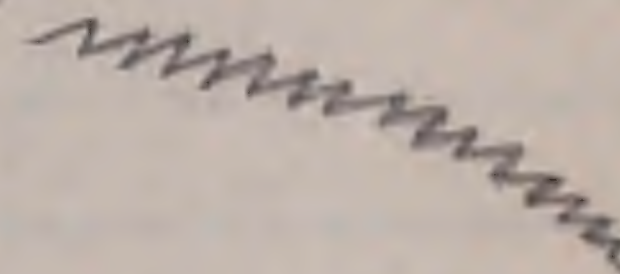
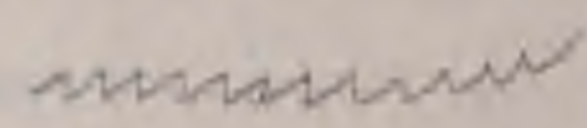
May 22, 1962
Pichincha

6:20 a.m. Seen one ♂ "minor" singing in flight. Crossing road in front of me. Song composed of 4 or 5 notes. More or less usual form. Bird flying with head & neck pointed diagonally upward. Wing beats very deep and rapid, but bird not progressing very rapidly. Unfortunately, I couldn't see bird well enough to catch the details of its plumage.

7:00 a.m. Watching a single ♂ "minor" singing. 2-note song.

Catmonia, May 22, 1962, II

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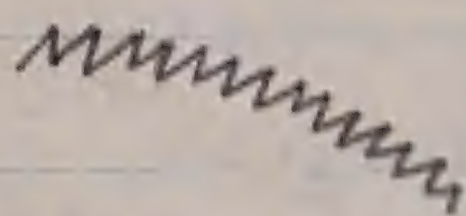
2p Might be transcribed as "  



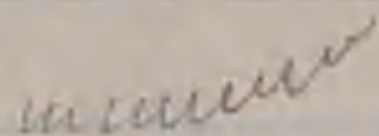
Second note much louder than first.

Bird sitting in unmutualized posture during performance, lifting head during utterance of the notes. All I could see of the bird was that it is gray on head & underneath, apparently with rufous tail-coverts.

8:00 a.m. See the same or another bird singing. Singing steadily but all songs 2-note. Just as before. This time I can see that the bird is definitely streaked on back. Apparently rufous under tail, but not very dark rufous.

Aha! 8:10 a.m. Bird has been giving 2-note songs steadily. Then gives 1 4-note. Then resumes 2-note. Then another 4-note









Then flies away 8:13 a.m.

8:17 a.m. Catch another glimpse of same bird singing 2-note songs. It is definitely rufous under tail. Moderately light rufous. This time I can see both back stripes & rufous (but the back stripes are

Catamarca, May 22, 1962, III.

(22)

Quite good!



really remarkably inconspicuous
notes viewed from the side)

← This is the posture the bird
assumed during notes. Definite
but slight CR. Breast & belly
fluffed separately. Tail out, not
down. Wings meeting on back.

I think I have been seeing a different birds singing this
morning. The last few incidents recorded above occurred some distance
& away from where I saw a bird singing first. I have now, 8:30,
gone back to first area, and there is a bird singing here now (too).
All 2-note songs.

I am now beginning to think that there is only species of
the "minor" type around Quito. If so, its song patterns are quite
variable. Why? Intrinsic differences between local populations
?? Or differences in intensity ?? If so, which are the higher intens-
ity songs?

Catamarca, I

May 24, 1962

Cerro de Inaguito

Working in usual field here

5:35 A single ♂ D'Orbigny's (probably coming back from a
fight) utters loud hoarse "zeeah zeeah zeeah zeeah" in flight
and as he lands. Obviously HAC

5:46 Hear a peculiar "minor" type song:

Catmonia, May 24, 1962, II.

(23)

11
~~~~~  
~~~~~

3 notes - the last being a clear whistle.

5:48 pm. Another "minor" song. More typical

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~~~~~

5:50. Finally see bird singing. Has both streaked back and rufous under tail. Now giving quite long and more or less typical (double) phrases. E.g.

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~~~~~

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Catamenia, May 24, 1962, III.

(24)

These songs are given from the usual posture. No CR. ♂ also utters quite a lot of them, clear, soft, single "Treet"s between and after phrases. Especially likely to utter 1 "Treet" immediately after phrase. Could these "Treet"s be PN's?

♂ then flies away, but sings a lot more in distance. Phrases quite variable. Most are comme ça:

